

A

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, May 11. 1708.

ALL the Prisoners now in the Castles of Edinburgh and Sterling, and others confin'd in Scotland on Account of the Invasion, are, say the publick News-Papers, to be brought up to London, and kept there during the Pleasure of the Government, or rather, as other Papers with more Justice to the Government express it, they are to be brought up in order to their particular Examination, that such as are Guilty may be brought to Justice, and by Consequence to Punishment, and the Innocent be discharg'd.

From Edinburgh it is advised, that upon the News of this Order, the People appear'd very much surpriz'd; that some of them seem dejected, others complain of it as Injurious, and the People speak variously

of it as a Novelty upon the Union, and a Kind of subjecting Scotland to the English Judicatures.

It cannot be doubted, but upon this extraordinary Event every Body will be opening their Mouths, as their different Interests, Friends or Parties are concern'd in it; and Clamour is always the Effect of Discontent; but shall I enter a little into the Merits of this Case, and if possible make some small Objection to the complaining Part of this unsatisfy'd Generation, that if their Mouths cannot be stopp'd, at least their Reasons may be fairly answer'd, their Allegations confuted, and wiser Men more satisfy'd.

We have Cause to bless GOD in this Age, that we live in a Government, whose Actions

Actions will bear a clear Light, and are best pleas'd when their Proceedings are put in an impartial View to honest Men; heretofore Misrepresentations and false Lights have been the Practice of our Courts, and the Grievance of the Subject; now the Case alters, and we find it the Practice of the Subject, and the Grievance of the Court.

As for me, it has been and ever shall be my Practice to put all Things in the clearest Light I can; if it offends any Body, I have had little Regard to that, I have endeavour'd to shew you the *shortest Way* to TRUTH on several Occasions, and I have now for a long time been shewing you the *shortest Way* to PEACE, and all by putting Things in a clear Light, and endeavouring to represent them, *not as they are pretended to be by Parties and private Persons*, but as they really are in their own Nature. — If at one time this plain Way of Dealing offends our Courts, if at another time the People, I have been equally indifferent, and am so still, and shall be so whenever the Tables turn again; for GOD forbid, I should deviate from Truth and Plainness, be it for what Hazard or Damage soever.

I come now to state the Case between the Government and the Scots Prisoners, and impartially to examine, if the QUEEN has done them any Wrong in this Confinement; and in this Case I shall be as plain as I pretend to above, on either side, let the End determine the Justice of the Debate.

1. If the Government has been in no Danger, if there has been no threatned Invasion, no French Fleet on the Shoar, no Army on Board to land in Scotland, no Pretender to usurp on her Majesty's Title and Possession, no Design to subvert our Constitution, and overthrow the Government; Then indeed the Government have been most unaccountably Tyrannical, Unjust and very Cruel to imprison any Men at all, under Pretence of Danger and Hazard from their encouraging the Enemy.

Nor is this so ridiculous a Suggestion as some may imagine, when I shall tell you, that like the old Affair in the Popish Plot, there are

a Sort of People who pretend to tell you now, it is all a Sham, that the French bid no Army on Board, nor any Design to make an Invasion; That was all a Jest, a State-Sham, a Trick of the Government to amuse us all, to put the Nation in Charge, and answer Politick-Court Designs against the new Election of Parliament Men, during which some Alarm of this Sort was necessary; just as in the late King's Time, when they wanted to turn the Peoples Thoughts, then a Plot was to break out, and the like; that this was nothing but the Dunkirk Squadron only a little stronger than usual, cruising about for the Dutch East India Men, and improv'd as above, to see if they could have an Opportunity to oppress the Gentry and Nobility, who were not of their own Party.

This wild Sort of Stuff, let it seem never so ridiculous, I assure you, is now hot in the Mouths of the Party, and this they think is the next Card they have to play; and if the Nation could be work'd up to the Belief of this, I confess, they would have much to say against the Government, for taking up any People on pretended Suspicions.

2. If there has been no Correspondence, if there has been no Invitations, no Ship call'd the KIND MAN, who had landed Oglevy of Boyne, had sent Emissaries, and brought back Encouragements, and made perhaps more Voyages than one; if there had been no Speeches let fall among the Party in Scotland, discovering their Expectation of this Affair, their Joy at its Approach, and their Disappointment at its Miscarriage; if this had not been, it might have been something of an unnecessary Caution to take up Gentlemen, and put them to all this Uneasiness and Expence, and the Government might really have been reproached with Cruelty and Revenge.
3. If the Gentlemen now in Custody have given the Government no Reason to jealous them in particular, no Reason to challenge their Conduct, or suppose them

them dangerous in this Case, either by Relative Characters or Personal Character, Religious Principle or Politick Principle, either by their present or former Behaviour, it would then leave some Room to pretend private Pique, Personal or Party Spleen had its Share in these Commitments, and Abundance of Clamour we should have on that Head.

But on the contrary; If all these Things joyn together to make the present Transaction of the Government reasonable; if the publick Safety made it necessary, if the secret Intelligence carry'd on between the Parties at Home, and the Enemies Abroad, are visible and perfectly discover'd; if the

particular Persons are proper Objects, on which the Government might justly be excused in suspecting; then all this Noise falls to the Ground, and the Issue of all this is at hand.

As for the sending them to *England*, I think, the noble Persons themselves have Reason to bless the Union, and be abundantly satisfy'd in the Share they have of Liberty by their *English* Peerage, where they are sure of having fair Trials, just Judgment, and all Encouragement and Opportunity imaginable for their Defence; and if innocent, a publick and honourable Discharge; which, had former Managements in their Country been in Force, they could not have been so sure of; but of this hereafter.

MISCELLANEA.

I cannot think of our *High Flying* Managements in *England*, as to Murrep-
septings, Things I have often talk'd to you about, without observing how exactly their Friends, who managed for the Pretender in his late Attempt upon us, chimed in with them in *Scotland*.

I know nothing we have been more be-
holden to this Party for in both Nations upon all such Occasions as these, as the Ab-
surdity of their Pretences — Let us but look back a little.

Was ever any thing more absurd than King *James* and his Party wheedling with the *Dissenters* to give them Liberty of Conscience by his own arbitrary dispensing Authority, and his expecting they should be content with their Religious Liberty at the Price of their Constitution, a Thing, tho' a few were deluded with, yet the Body of *Dissenters* soon saw through; the Traia indeed was laid deep and subtilly; but this was plain to every Body, that it was utterly inconsistent with the Popish Interest to protect the *Dissenters*, any otherwise than as it was made a Project to create a Feud between them and the Church, and in the End destroy both?

From thence we come to the Occasional Bill, and here was the same Sham practised; O Persecution was a sad Thing, no Body design'd Persecution, the *Dissenters* were not to be persecuted in the least; nay, the very Preamble of the Bill made a Glorious Declaration, That Persecution was contrary to the Christian Religion, and the Articles of the Church of *England*; and yet was any thing more directly tending to Persecution than that Bill, and was it not so in the Nature of the Thing?

Just thus the Emissaries of the Pretender in *Scotland* bubbled the poor People there, in hopes to amuse the ignorant and prejudiced, tho' honest, Folk of the *Presbyterian* Church there; that the Pretender, tho' Popish in Principle, back'd with a Tyrannick Monarch's formidable Army, supported by a *Jacobite* and *Episcopal* Party at Home, should yet uphold and maintain the *Presbyterian* Church-Government.

Was ever any thing absurd like this? Was there any Possibility, that a Party, whose being deposed from their Ecclesiastick Authority in *Scotland*, has been the main Ground of their adhering to this Invasion, should be content to see themselves still crush'd